

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 003487

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/28/2012

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: MFA D/U/S ILKIN'S MAY 27 CYPRUS BRIEFING  
TO ANKARA DIPLOMATIC CORPS

REF: ANKARA 3412

(U) Classified by DCM Robert S. Deutsch. Reason:1.5(b)(d)

1. (C) Summary: MFA Deputy U/S Baki Ilkin briefed representatives of EU and Permfive countries May 27 regarding GOT and "TRNC" efforts to reinvigorate the Cyprus process. Ilkin asserted that decisions by "TRNC" leader Denktas and the GOT allowing Greek Cypriots to visit the north and the Turkish mainland are helping to improve the atmosphere on the island. He volunteered, however, that such steps do little directly to ameliorate the core disputes between Greek- and Turkish Cypriots on issues including territory, restitution, and Greek Cypriot right of return to the north. End summary.

2. (C) Ilkin noted at the outset that in the aftermath of the latest, unsuccessful round of UN-sponsored Cyprus talks, all sides needed to bridge the widening "confidence gap." As a result, at Denktas's initiative, the "TRNC" decided last month to allow Greek Cypriots to visit their former homes in the north, a move matched by the GOT's decision to permit Greek Cypriot tourism in Turkey. According to Ilkin, some 300 thousand Greek Cypriots have taken advantage of the move to see the north; some 150 thousand Turkish Cypriots have visited the south. Currently, Greek- and Turkish Cypriots are crossing the border at rates of up to six thousand and three thousand per week, respectively. Some 1,000 Turkish Cypriots go south daily to work, he added. The Greek Cypriot side, Ilkin alleged, is trying to place some restrictions on those visiting the north: any foodstuffs brought back from Turkish Cyprus in excess of half a kilo can be confiscated at the border; moreover, the Greek Cypriot Parliament is looking at legislation to make it a criminal offense for any Greek Cypriot to spend the night in the Turkish sector.

3. (C) Ilkin noted that such measures, while helping to improve the atmosphere on the island, "do not solve the problem by themselves." In that vein, the "TRNC" and the GOT are willing to discuss the issues. However, Ilkin said he wanted to make it clear that: 1) the "TRNC," not/not the GOT, will continue to be the Greek Cypriots' interlocutor in any talks; and 2) the UNSYG's Cyprus plan (Annan III) cannot be a "basis" for further negotiations -- that would eliminate "room for maneuver." Instead, 3) the plan could serve as an instruments to bridge the gaps; "elements" of the plan could be salvaged and discussed if indeed this would be useful in making progress. If the plan were a "basis", preserving its balance would leave too little space for negotiation between the two sides. Denktas and the GOT are willing to see a negotiation of the two side's request for changes to the plan. "The problem is that the disagreement between the sides is on the same four or five issues," Ilkin said. This makes compromise difficult. Nonetheless the "TRNC" is evaluating how to proceed, despite the Greek Cypriot "pre-conditions" enumerated by President Papadopoulos

4. (C) Ilkin asserted that lifting the embargo on the "TRNC" was key to establishing increased confidence to underpin future negotiations. He noted that the EU was considering a package toward this end, but said the GOT was withholding judgment pending: 1) the actual publication of the package and 2) Denktas' evaluation of it.

5. (C) During the Q and A segment, several EU diplomats urged the GOT to act with dispatch to get the process moving again, noting that there is not all that much time until Cyprus officially joins the EU next May; it will shortly again become a fish-or-cut-bait situation. UK Ambassador Westmacott observed that by not accepting Annan III as the "basis" of negotiations, it appeared the GOT is trying to start again from scratch. This he said, would only doom the Cyprus process to failure again. Ilkin demurred with an arch joke, saying that he "knows how to play softball and hardball."

6. (C) Comment: Ilkin's briefing reflected the GOT stance

reported reftel, but did little to advance the prospects for a Cyprus settlement process that gets back on track quickly. End comment.  
PEARSON